



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services**

State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee

Advocacy and Customer Service Section

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
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Carl Britton-Watkins, Chairperson

April 10, 2008

TO: Legislative Oversight Committee Chairs
Secretary Dempsey Benton
Division of MH/DD/SAS Executive Leadership Team

From: State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee

**RE: State CFAC Advisory 20080410
Eliminating Tobacco Use in Mental Health Facilities**

The State CFAC advises that while moving forward with the rule change to eliminate tobacco use in mental health facilities, the division to place great detail into the planning process of this elimination and that it must be treated as an addiction, not merely a habit. The treatment of this addiction will require increased staff and patient education on evidence based treatments.

To prevent and minimize withdrawal symptoms facility based treatment must include a safe and comfortable detoxification from tobacco as is done with other addicting substances.

Patients must have access to tobacco dependence treatment not only on premises, but as a continuum of care. This would involve funding sources (that follow the person) covering the costs involved for the entire treatment process, including the cost of pharmaceuticals, pharmacotherapy and counseling. Again, this means after the patient has been discharged from a facility there must be a continuum of care available.

As advocates, we must pay careful attention to the desire of protecting/exempting a persons "right to smoke" while living with mental illness. As the nation moves toward a smoke free environment, the stigma that follows a smoker further complicates the stigmas we are working hard to overcome.

Reference

Jill M. Williams, MD JAMA 2008;299(5):571-573

cc: President Pro Tem Marc Basnight
Speaker Joe Hackney
Patrice Roesler
Yvonne Copeland
Local CFAC Chairs



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